

SESSION EIGHT

MISSION OF FFC

I. CALLED TO GLORIFY GOD

Christ Jesus gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. Titus 2:14

According to this passage in *Titus 2*, Jesus Christ died for 2 distinct reasons. First, in order to redeem us **individually** from our sinfulness. Secondly, He died in order to **corporately** purify a people for His possession. Christ's redemptive work on the cross incorporates both the individual and corporate elements of our relationship with God. His death on the cross paid the price for sinners individually in order that they may become part of the redeemed church devoted to "the apostles" doctrine, and fellowship, and worship, and prayer (*Acts 2:42*). How the church is set up goes a long way in commending the gospel of Christ, showing God's glory to this world through His Word, and protecting us from the world and worldliness.

A. What is Church?

Almost everyone has an **opinion** of what a church is. Often these opinions are based on preference, comfort, or taste instead of being grounded in an understanding of the **Scriptures**. In the New Testament, we find many examples of how early Christians structured their churches. Scriptures spreads light on such topics as meeting together (*Hebrews 10:25, Acts 20:17, 28*), elections (*Acts 1:23-26, 6:5-6*), discipline (*1 Corinthians 5*), contributions (*Romans 15:26, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2*), letters of commendation (*Acts 18:27*), administration of ordinances (*1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Acts 2:41*), and qualifications for membership (*Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:47*). God does not leave us lacking, but gives us clear instruction regarding how to order our lives together.

Webster's dictionary defines church as "a building for Christian public worship.", but the church isn't a building. Our word "**church**" comes from the Greek term "*ekklesia*," which is a compound word meaning "**to call out**." The church is the *calling out* of God's people to Himself. We are called out in order to come together, being called to community with one another. This relationship we have as His "body" is actually similar to the **marriage relationship**; it is a covenant relationship, one instituted by God Himself, one that that **can not be broken** (*Ephesians 5:23-27*).

Ephesians 4:4-6 says this: "There is **one body** and one Spirit, just as also you were **called** in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." God has declared that if we indeed have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ then we are "one" **body...His body**. God has said we are "one body" establishing a covenant relationship between all who believe in the name of Jesus. The church is God's covenant community of His people called by His name. The church isn't a **building**, or an **organization**. It's a **living organism** of God's people who meet together to be strengthened and then go out into the world allowing **Jesus Christ** to manifest His Life through their **actions** (*Hebrews 10:25*).

Believers have been called by God into covenant communion with Jesus Christ and into community with His people. None of us deserve this privilege; it is part of the inheritance of our Father to His precious children.

II. MISSION OF THE CHURCH

A. The Mission of the Church

We believe the local church is the focal point of God's plan for displaying his glory to the nations. Churches are to reflect the character of God, evidenced by the following nine marks:

“1. Expositional Preaching

This is preaching which **expounds** what Scripture says in a particular passage, carefully explaining its meaning and applying it to the congregation. It is a commitment to hearing God's Word and to recovering the centrality of it in our worship.

2. Biblical Theology

Paul charges Titus to "teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Our concern should be not only with how we are taught, but with **what** we are taught. Biblical theology is a commitment to know the God of the Bible as He has revealed Himself in Scripture.

3. Biblical Understanding of the Good News

The gospel is the heart of Christianity. But the good news is not that God wants to meet people's felt needs or help them develop a healthier self-image. We have sinfully rebelled against our Creator and Judge. Yet He has graciously sent His Son to die the death we deserved for our sin, and He has credited Christ's acquittal to those who **repent** of their sins and **believe** in Jesus' death and resurrection. *That* is the good news.

4. Biblical Understanding of Conversion

The spiritual change each person needs is so radical, so near the root of us, that only God can do it. We need God to **convert** us. Conversion need not be an emotionally heated experience, but it must evidence itself in godly fruit if it is to be what the Bible regards as a true conversion.

5. Biblical Understanding of Evangelism

How someone shares the gospel is closely related to how he understands the gospel. To present it as an additive that gives non-Christians something they naturally want (i.e. joy or peace) is to present a half-truth, which elicits false conversions. The whole truth is that our deepest need is spiritual life, and that new life only comes by **repenting** of our sins and **believing** in Jesus. We present the gospel openly, and leave the converting to God.

6. Biblical Understanding of Membership

Membership should reflect a living commitment to a local church in **attendance, giving, prayer** and **service**; otherwise it is meaningless, worthless, and even dangerous. We should not allow people to keep their membership in our churches for sentimental reasons or lack of attention. To be a member is knowingly to be traveling together as aliens and strangers in this world as we head to our heavenly home.

7. Biblical Church Discipline

Church **discipline** gives parameters to church membership. The idea seems negative to people today – “didn’t our Lord forbid judging?” But if we cannot say how a Christian should *not* live, how can we say how he or she *should* live? Each local church actually has a biblical responsibility to judge the life and teaching of its leaders, and even of its members, particularly insofar as either could compromise the church’s witness to the gospel.

8. Promotion of Christian Discipleship and Growth

A pervasive concern with church growth exists today – not simply with growing numbers, but with growing members. Though many Christians measure other things, the only certain observable sign of **growth** is a life of increasing holiness, rooted in Christian self-denial. These concepts are nearly extinct in the modern church. Recovering true discipleship for today would build the church and promote a clearer witness to the world.

9. Biblical Understanding of Leadership

What eighteenth-century Baptists and Presbyterians often agreed upon was that there should be a **plurality** of elders in each local church. This plurality of elders is not only biblical, but practical — it has the immense benefit of rounding out the pastor’s gifts to ensure the proper shepherding of God’s church.”¹

B. Mission Statement of Faith Fellowship Church

The mission of Faith Fellowship Church is to glorify God through lives transformed by Jesus Christ; and through teaching and training the truth of God’s Word.

1. Our vision and core values:

Teaching God’s Word: The foundation of FFC is the preaching and teaching of the truth of Scripture.

Serving together: The framework of FFC is the organized structure, walls and pillars of servant hood, whereby the Body is committed to serving together within the church (Committed Broken Servants).

Reaching others: As the body of FFC leaves the church building, addressing community needs and concerns, doing the good works for which we have been saved, people in the community are reached and we become the “go to” people.

Disciple making: The roof of discipling includes the disciple-making and training ministries that result in evangelism and transformed lives. This is the practical application of our lives. After reaching out, people come in and we offer discipleship opportunities.

¹ www.9marks.org “The Nine Marks of a Healthy Church.”

III. COMMUNION

The Lord instituted two **ordinances** for the church, they are: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are "sacraments" in the strict sense of the word (a religious rite or practice), but not in the common understanding of "sacrament" as a means of salvation. Neither of these ordinances contains, nor transfers any saving grace, but rather serve as symbols of what has already taken place in the heart and life of the Believer. Therefore, it is more appropriate to refer to baptism and communion as **ordinances, observances, memorials, or symbols**, than it is to label them sacraments. The New Testament refers to communion as:

1. The Lord's Supper *I Corinthians 11:20*
2. The Lord's Table *I Corinthians 10:21*
3. The Communion *I Corinthians 10:16*
4. An Ordinance *I Corinthians 11:2*

The Lord's Supper is recorded for us in *Matthew 26:17-35*, and then relayed with instructions in *I Corinthians 11:23-34*. With these two passages of Scripture we can ascertain some important truths.

1. The observance of communion has its origin in the Jews' experience of Passover (*Exodus 12*).
2. The observance of communion has its origin in Jesus' observance of the Jewish Passover (*Matthew 26:17-35*).
3. The observance of communion has a threefold purpose:
 - a. As a memorial of the Person of Christ..... *I Corinthians 11:24-25*
 - b. As a testimony to the death of Christ..... *I Corinthians 11:26*
 - c. As a means of personal introspection by looking backward (*I Corinthians 11:26*), inward (*I Corinthians 11:28*), and forward (*I Corinthians 11:26*).
4. The observance of communion is ultimately a tribute to the death of Jesus Christ. Who, in fact, is responsible for the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior?
 - a. Satan *Genesis 3:15*
 - b. Jews *John 2:19, Acts 2:23, 36*
 - c. Judas *Matthew 26:2*
 - d. Pilate *John 19:11*
 - e. Crowd *Mark 15:13*
 - f. Us *Romans 5:8, Col. 1:20, I John 2:22, 4:10*
 - g. Soldiers *John 19:23*
 - h. God *John 19:10-11, Isaiah 53:3-10*
 - i. Adam *Romans 5:12-19*
 - j. Jesus *Hebrews 12:2, John 10:17-18, Matthew 26:53*
5. The observance of communion can be hindered by:
 - a. Divisions *I Corinthians 11:18*
 - b. Carnality *I Corinthians 11:22*
6. The observance of communion carries a solemn warning in *I Corinthians 11:29-32*. This warning is of God's judgment that may include sickness, death, or chastisement should the communion be participated in unworthily.

7. The observance of communion is to be preceded by self-examination, confession, and repentance (*I Corinthians 11:28, 31*). This process is further defined in *I John 1:9; II Corinthians 7:10* and *James 4:7-8*.

Of the three types of common communion services observed among Bible-believing Christians (open, closed, and close), Faith Fellowship Church observes a **close** communion. Although we welcome every person who professes Jesus Christ as Lord to partake in communion, we suggest that only baptized believers participate, and that they examine their heart to repent of any known sin so as not to partake of communion in an unworthy fashion. The Bible says that God is displeased by the hypocrites' celebration of His Son's death as the means of deliverance from sin when he is willingly and deliberately indulging in sin. It is not the elements but the symbol that is mocked by this behavior, for neither the cup nor the bread contains any special qualities or sacred identity. Communion commemorates His death, it does not reenact it.

IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT

In addition to being called **Eternal** (*Hebrews 9:14*), and **Comforter** (*John 14:26*), the Holy Spirit has other titles in the Word of God that identify His Person and function. He is called, **The Spirit of:**

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|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. God | <i>I Cor. 3:16</i> |
| 2. Christ | <i>Romans 8:9</i> |
| 3. Adoption | <i>Romans 8:15</i> |
| 4. Truth | <i>John 16:14</i> |
| 5. Grace | <i>Hebrews 10:29</i> |
| 6. Glory | <i>I Peter 4:14</i> |
| 7. Life | <i>Romans 8:2</i> |
| 8. Promise | <i>Acts 1:4,5</i> |
| 9. Holiness | <i>Romans 1:4</i> |
| 10. Faith | <i>II Cor. 4:13</i> |
| 11. Wisdom | <i>Ephesians 1:17</i> |
| 12. Revelation | <i>Ephesians 1:17</i> |

A. His Personality and Deity

He has a **mind** (*Romans 8:27*) that manifests a **will** (*I Corinthians 12:11*) and **emotion** (*Ephesians 4:30*). In addition to these attributes of personality, He also; **loves** (*Romans 15:30*), **prays** (*Romans 8:26*), and **speaks** (*Acts 8:29*).

The Word of God also reveals at least four divine attributes of the Holy Spirit:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Omnipresence | <i>Psalms 139:7</i> |
| 2. Omnipotence | <i>Genesis 1:2</i> |
| 3. Omniscience | <i>I Cor. 2:10-11</i> |
| 4. Eternality | <i>Hebrews 9:14</i> |

As a matter of fact, when Ananias and Saphira are confronted about their sin of lying to God (*Acts 5:4*), they are told that they lied to the **Holy Spirit** (*Acts 5:3*).

B. His Symbols

Certain symbols are used in God's Word to describe the Holy Spirit and His works, they are:

1. Dove *John 1:32*
2. Water *John 7:37-39*
3. Oil *Luke 4:18*
4. Seal *Ephesians 1:13*
5. Wind *Acts 2:1-2*
6. Fire *Acts 2:3*
7. Earnest *Ephesians 1:14*

C. His Ministry to Believers

- General:**
1. Comforts *John 16:7-11*
 2. Regenerates *Titus 3:5*
 3. Baptizes *I Cor. 12:13*
 4. Indwells *I Cor. 3:16*
 5. Seals *Ephesians 1:13*
 6. Fills *Ephesians 5:18*

- Specific:**
1. Prayer *Romans 8:26*
 2. Guidance *John 16:13*
 3. Teaches *I John 2:27*
 4. Empowers *Acts 1:8*
 5. Love of God *Romans 5:5*
 6. Changes *II Cor. 3:18*
 7. Strengthens *Ephesians 3:16*
 8. Assures *Romans 8:16*
 9. Liberty *II Cor. 3:17*
 10. Gifts *I Cor. 12:7-11*

His Result in the Believer

1. Fruit *Galatians 5:22-23*
2. Worship *Ephesians 5:19-20*
3. Submission *Ephesians 5:21*
4. Contentment *John 7:37-39*
5. Purity *Galatians 5:16*
6. Eternal Life *Galatians 6:8*

With this information in mind, the warnings from Paul to not **quench** nor **grieve** the Holy Spirit take on a new importance. The daily life of the individual believer and the corporate life of the church subsist on the power of the Holy Spirit. It is foolish for us to do anything contrary to His leading and still expect His blessing. May we always remember the words of Zechariah, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit", says the Lord of Hosts." (Zachariah 4:6)